



## **Ballyholme C of I church re-opens with celebration of cross-community support**

The Church of Ireland parishioners of St Columbanus, Ballyhome, celebrated the reopening of their restored church with a community service on Monday 5th December. The church closed for 7 months of restoration work on 30th April and throughout this time, they [churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)

met for Sunday worship in the assembly hall of St Columbanus College, Ballymaconnell Road.

In a service styled as a Community Re-opening, the Rector Canon Simon Doogan on behalf of the parish, thanked St Columbanus College for its hospitality and cross-community welcome. Mr Liam Perry school principal and Mr Brian Jamison, school bursar were joined by the Traditional Musicians and Choir along with senior members of staff. The school's Board of Governors were also present with their Chair, Mr Pat McCartan and the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the Bishop of Down and Connor, the Most Reverend Noel Treanor.

It was also an opportunity for the parish to express its gratitude to the Design Team for their care and oversight of the project. The O'Hanlon Brothers of Coalisland were the lead builders and a special gift was made to Judith Hamilton, Project Architect from Architects Knox and Markwell. A sculpture of Saint Columbanus, who the parish and school have in common, was presented to the school principal.

The Mayor of Ards and North Down, Alderman Deborah Girvan, represented the Borough and



other guests included representatives from the other churches in Ballyholme, Towerview and Ballyholme Primary Schools and a number of shops and businesses local to the Groomsport Road.

The service was led by Bishop of Down and Dromore, the Right Reverend Harold Miller, who conducted a short series of reflections at the five key points of Restoration: The new door and re-sited font, the new organ and audio-visual system, the re-framed windows and new lighting, the relocated pulpit and lectern and the newly commissioned Communion rail and Table.

With its doors re–opened in time for Christmas, St Columbanus Ballyholme looks forward to welcoming the community to its usual menu of festive services. A service of Dedication of gifts is planned for early in the New Year.

[More photos from the Community Re–opening Service can be found here.](#)

## **Student teachers contribute to the Empowerment of Women Programme in the Holy Land**

Student teachers at the Church of Ireland College of Education, now the Church of Ireland Centre in DCU, have made a donation to the Empowerment of Women Project in the Diocese of Jerusalem.

Director of the centre, the Revd Dr Anne Lodge, presented the contribution from the students to Archbishop Suheil Dawani on Monday evening (December 5).

The donation came about as a result of the United Dioceses of Dublin & Glendalough's link withj the Diocese of Jerusalem. Dr Lodge



***The Revd Dr Anne Lodge making the presentation on behalf of the students of the Church of Ireland Centre at DCU. Also pictured are Philip McKinley, Archbishop Michael Jackson and Archbishop Suheil Dawani.***

commented: “The vast majority of our students are female and this has been the case for many years. Issues of gender equality and care for the marginalised have been a very important part of our work in the College with our undergraduate and post–graduate students”.

She spoke of the recent incorporation of CICE into Dublin City University as the Church of Ireland Centre. “Social justice, inclusion and respect for diversity were and are really important

values that underpin all that we did in CICE and all that we now do in the Church of Ireland Centre in DCU. The Church of Ireland Centre continues to have a core role in the preparation of teachers to work in primary schools under Church of Ireland, Methodist, Presbyterian and Society of Friends patronage throughout the State. Our relationship with these schools is just as important to us as it always was in the College. Our connection with our students and our graduates remains very precious to us. Our history and our values continue to be something in which we have a great sense of pride,” Dr Lodge stated. The Diocese of Jerusalem’s Empowerment of Women Programme is spearheaded by Mrs Shafeeqa Dawani, the Archbishop’s wife, along with a number of others to empower women of the diocese and the wider community.

## **St Anne’s Cathedral parishioner receives MBE for charity fundraising**

St Anne’s Cathedral parishioner Stanley McIlroy, aged 92, was at Buckingham Palace on



***Stanley McIlroy and his wife Noreen after the presentation ceremony at Buckingham Palace.***

December 6 to receive an MBE from Prince William, Duke of Cambridge.

Stanley was named for the award, for charitable services, in the Queen's Birthday Honours List last June.

In almost 60 years of dedicated fundraising, Stanley and his wife Noreen have raised more

than £1million for charity, with the lion's share for Cancer Research UK.

Stanley, a former Cathedral Board Member, has worshipped in St Anne's for almost 60 years. Speaking in June, he said he was delighted to accept his MBE on behalf of Noreen and all the people who have supported his fundraising activities over more than half a century.

"It is a way of Cancer Research UK saying thank you and I accept it willingly," Stanley said. "If Noreen and the people of east Belfast had not been behind me I would never have raised all the money."

Many years ago, Stanley's father learned he had cancer and might only have six months to live. But he survived another 12 years, and Stanley believes his life was extended because of an operation he had undergone at the Royal Victoria Hospital.

For this reason Stanley and Noreen have worked tirelessly and selflessly for decades, raising more than £850,000 for Cancer Research with an additional £200,000 plus going to other charities including the Widows and Orphans, the Heart Foundation and Bryson House.



Stanley said he believed his father had lived all those years beyond his diagnosis because medical research had made the life-saving operation possible. The couple say Cancer Research UK funds research worldwide in the hope that a breakthrough in the cure for cancer will make a difference to all sufferers.

Stanley was manager of Yardley cosmetics for 25 years and Noreen is a retired nutrition and hygiene lecturer. They married in St Anne's on Easter Monday, April 22 1957. They have a daughter, Susan. Stanley was a Cathedral Board member for 33 years, and Noreen's father was one of the sergeants who carried Lord Carson's body into St Anne's for burial.

Stanley, along with Sir Donald Murray and Dean Sammy Crooks, was instrumental in the launch of the first of the now legendary Black Santa charity sit-outs, the 40th of which will take place on the steps of St Anne's this month.

Stanley and Noreen did charity work for many years, but it was 1987 before they became officially involved with Cancer Research, joining the local branch committee. Stanley later became chairman, and when the committee dissolved, he and Noreen continued to fundraise for Cancer

Research in the Knock and Newtownards Road and Cregagh Road areas. They arranged to have collection boxes placed in shops and businesses, organised flag days and balls, and persuaded volunteers to do a variety of challenges including parachute jumps, marathon runs, a cycle along the Great Wall of China, even immersion in a tank of sharks!

Stanley said the fundraising keeps his brain active. “Eight years ago I took a heart attack. I now have a pacemaker and stents. Through research I am alive today. I can’t just sit and do nothing,” he said.

## **North Wales diocese visits Meath & Kildare**

During the weekend of 2 – 4 December a team from Meath & Kildare’s link diocese of Bangor (north Wales) visited Ireland.

Bangor diocese, in the northwest of Wales, has many similarities to Meath and Kildare. The purpose of the link is to learn as much as possible from one another as both dioceses seek to prosper and grow.



The visiting team consisted of Bishop Andy John, accompanied by six of his clergy and a diocesan youth officer. They were hosted in different parishes around Meath and Kildare.

On Saturday 3 December they visited Tullamore and Mullingar to see and hear how parishes are working out their mission.

On the Saturday evening the Bangor team met with all diocesan clergy, Youth Officer and Diocesan Secretary. During this session there was an opportunity to talk about some of the practical action being taken to achieve the M & K diocesan vision, 'Together in God's love transforming lives'. This included:

- Plans to run a study course in every parish union / group across Meath and Kildare during Lent 2017
- The 'Good for the Sole' project

Bishop Andy and the Bangor team also brought their Irish hosts up to date with their latest work, especially on developing and encouraging discipleship.

After the Saturday evening session the teams from both dioceses had dinner together in the Dunboyne Parish Centre.

On Sunday team members visited various parishes. In the evening there was a service in Trim Cathedral, where the preacher was Dean Kathy Jones (Dean of Bangor).

After the Service there was a reception in the adjoining hall before the Bangor team began their journey home. Each member of their team were given a copy of our 'Food for the Sole' cookbook as a memento of their visit.

## **Bishop criticises Sturgeon for suggesting Scotland could offer abortions to Northern Irish women**

Bishop John Keenan of Paisley has voiced his objections to Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon's plans to offer Northern Irish women NHS abortions.

Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK where abortion is illegal unless the mother's life is at risk.

Some women from Northern Ireland choose to fund their own private terminations in other parts of the UK, which can cost from £400 to £2,000.

Bishop Keenan has spoken out against the suggestion made, according to the Scottish Catholic Observer (SCO).

He said: "If the Irish choose to respect life, who are we to say we know better! Apart from anything else it is surely only right to respect the democratic will of the Northern Irish people and the decision of the Northern Ireland Assembly." Nicola Sturgeon made the comments at First Minister's Questions in November.



***First Minister Nicola Sturgeon made the comments at First Minister's Question Time in November***

She said she would speak with NHS Scotland about “what the situation would be right now in terms of accessing safe and legal abortion for women from Northern Ireland within NHS Scotland and whether there’s any improvements that are able to be made.”

Sturgeon added: “I believe that women should have the right to choose, within the limits that are currently set down in law, and that right should be defended. When a woman opts to have an abortion — I stress that that is never, ever an easy decision for any woman — the

procedure should be available in a safe and legal way.”

Northern Irish DUP politician Jim Wells told SCO that Sturgeon’s comments were “extremely unhelpful, unwarranted and she’d be better off dealing with her own issues.”

A spokesman from the Scottish Catholic Church added: “In offering to fund abortions for women coming to Scotland, politicians ignore the reality that abortion damages women and destroys a human life.

“Women and girls in a crisis pregnancy need support. There is always a better solution than abortion. Our legislators should be defending the weakest and most vulnerable in society, not exposing them to death.”

## **Vatican safeguarding commission launches new website**

A new website which will provide information on the Vatican’s Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors [PCPM] has been unveiled in English and will shortly add Spanish, Italian, French, and Portuguese versions.

The website – [www.protectionofminors.va](http://www.protectionofminors.va) – provides resources across four categories: ‘Healing and Care’, ‘Guidelines’, ‘Education’, and the ‘Day of Prayer [for the Victims and Survivors of Sexual Abuse]’.

It has included a template for local guidelines on preventing sexual abuse and provides news and information about the Commission’s mission.

Pope Francis formally appointed the first eight members of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors on 22 March 2014, following a recommendation from the Council of Cardinals. The president of the PCPM is Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley of Boston.

The eight include Irish survivor of clerical abuse, Marie Collins.

The Commission’s task is to advise the Pontiff on effective policies for the protection of minors and vulnerable adults.

According to Crux news, for over a year the members of the Commission have been working in small groups, focusing on different aspects related to the protection of minors and young adults from sexual abuse.



These include:

Healing and care for victim/survivors and their families.

Comprehensive guidelines in local Churches.

Education of Church leadership and ecclesial communities.

Initial and ongoing formation for clergy and religious in the protection of minors.

Theology and spirituality.

Canonical and civil norms governing the protection of minors.

The website was announced by the Vatican on 6 December, coinciding with the feast of St Nicholas, patron of children.

## **News briefs**

**+++ Castlecaulfield RTE radio broadcast -**  
Next Sunday, 11th December, at 11.45am a parish Eucharist will be broadcast live from St Michael and All Angels, Castlecaulfield, in the parish of Donaghmore on RTÉ1 Extra.

**+++ Installation of Canon of St. Patrick's, Dublin** - the Venerable Craig McCauley (Archdeacon of Kilmore) was installed by Dean William Morton as the Prebendary of Mulhuddart (representing the United Diocese of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh) in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin during evensong on Sunday, 4th December 2016. The new Canon was joined at the service by his wife Vida along with his parents and wider family. He commented afterwards that the day was meaningful on many levels: "My maternal grandparents sat in the pews 60 years ago when my Uncle Harry Deegan was in the boys' choir... As I represent the United Dioceses I look forward under God to embracing life in St Patrick's Cathedral in the years ahead and serving the Dean and Chapter in whatever way I can."

**+++ Killala ceremonies** - Advent Sunday 2016 saw the beginning of a new chapter in the on-going faith journey of Killala Group of Parishes when Revd Jennifer McWhirter was introduced by Bishop Patrick Rooke as their Priest in Charge. The Introduction took place in the context of a Service of Lesson and Carols for Advent in which representatives from the parishes in the Killala and Achonry end of the

United Diocese led worship in readings and hymns. The preacher was the Very Revd Alistair Grimason, Dean of Tuam, Killala and Achonry and a long-time friend of Mrs. McWhirter.

Colleagues, friends and family from across the Christian traditions were present to support her as she began a fresh phase of ministry and it was particularly welcoming to have Bishop John Flemming, Roman Catholic Bishop of Killala, present to pronounce the Benediction at the end of the service. The occasion was also a happy one for Canon Andrea Wills and Provost Stan Evans who were respectively installed by the Dean to the Prebendary Stalls of Kilanley and Ardagh, and Lackagh.

### **+++ Catholic church air-bombed in Burma - A**

Catholic church was bombed in the conflict-torn northern Shan state as renewed fighting intensified between the Burmese military and armed ethnic groups, reported ucanews.com. St Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Mongkoe Township near the Chinese border was hit by airstrikes on December 3, the feast of St Francis Xavier. Ucanews.com reported that the parish priest, nuns and some 1,000 Catholics from the area had already fled to China. No one was hurt

by the morning raid that caused fires to burn well into the afternoon.

### **+++ Modern slavery : Australian church leaders seek new law**

- The Primate of Australia, Melbourne Archbishop Philip Freier, has joined other religious leaders in Australia in calling for a new law to tackle modern slavery. He has co-signed a joint open letter asking the country's Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, to introduce a Modern Slavery Act. In addition to Archbishop Freier, the letter was signed by Australia's Roman Catholic Leader, Archbishop Denis Hart, as well as Baptist, Salvation Army, Presbyterian, Coptic, Lutheran and Hillsong churches, as well as Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist leaders acting through the Australian Freedom Network. The network was launched last year to work towards the eradication of slavery, human trafficking, sexual exploitation, child labour and forced marriage.

**+++ American Prayer Book revision** - The Episcopal Church's Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music (SCLM) plans to present the 2018 General Convention with four options regarding the possible revision of the 1979 Book

of Common Prayer, said the Rev. Devon Anderson, commission chair.

## **News links to reports on faith, politics and education**

### **Concern Worldwide co-founder dies after long illness**

Irish Times

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/concern-worldwide-co-founder-dies-after-long-illness-1.2894234#.WEbGbR1STfY.twitter>

### **Golden rules of the school Nativity play**

Irish News

<http://www.irishnews.com/opinion/columnists/2016/12/06/news/anita-robinson-golden-rules-of-the-school-nativity-play-819396/>

### **Married 'bishop and vicar' from organisation founded by St Patrick transform home into 'church'**

Irish Examiner

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/married-bishop-and-vicar-from-organisation-founded-by-st-patrick-transform-home-into-church-767375.html>

### **Christian Today**

Report on the homily given by the Archbishop of Canterbury at the annual Advent service at

[churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)

Lambeth Palace for parliamentarians and their staff (see above). Archbishop Justin told the service that a sense of the "endless" circle of the cycle of the years is false. "As Christians, we believe in a direction, a journey," said the Archbishop. "A journey that began with God and ends with God, and in which God accompanies us the whole way along the journey. In which there is both a sense of being looked after, but also of being held accountable and responsible."

### **Northern Echo**

Reports that a vicar and his wife have featured in a book written by the Archbishop of York, who has praised them for their community work. The Revd David and Davina Tomlinson run food aid projects in Shildon, as well as a credit union, an alcohol drop-in session and community gardens. They have fostered more than sixty children together. The Archbishop of York's latest book, *Agape Love Stories*, features 22 people, and focuses on how they have helped to change people's lives.

### **ITV/Tel/Times/Mail/EveStandard/City AM//Int Business Times/Brighton Argus**

Reports on a call by Church of England bishops in Sussex for an end to the "cycle of blame" in

the ongoing dispute affecting Southern trains which they say is causing misery in the lead up to Christmas. In a letter jointly addressed to Govia, the parent company of Southern, union leaders and the Department of Transport, the Bishop of Chichester, Dr Martin Warner speaks of the moral obligation of all parties in the dispute to consider 'first and foremost' their duty to provide reliable public transport.

<http://www.itv.com/news/london/2016-12-06/bishops-call-on-southern-to-end-travel-chaos-caused-by-union-dispute/>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/12/06/southern-strikes-rail-bosses-union-leaders-have-moral-duty-end/>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/pain-spreads-to-all-those-investors-fztw396k9>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4007708/Three-day-strike-hits-Southern-Rail-Commuters-face-delays-cancellations-walkout-continues.html>

<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/church-leaders-call-for-end-to-circle-of-blame-in-southern-rail-dispute-a3413471.html>

<http://www.cityam.com/255068/sussex-bishops-call-end-cycle-blame-southern-rail-strikes>

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/bishops-southern-rail-strike-intervention-welcomed-by-union-chief-1595113>

<http://www.brightonandhovenews.org/2016/12/06/train-delays-gods-on-the-line/>

## **Guard**

Report on the Church of England Pensions Board announcement last month of plans to close Manorhead Nursing Home, its 33-bed home near Hindhead, Surrey. Dr Jonathan Spencer, Chair of the Board, and Rev Richard Bodle, the vicar of St Albans church in Hindhead and the chaplain to the home, are among those quoted in the article. Dr Spencer said: "After more than 60 years of the Pensions Board providing care and nursing at Manorhead, this has been a heartbreaking decision to take."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/06/church-of-england-closing-manorhead-care-home-hindhead-surrey-lack-of-staff>

## **Ind**

Reports that Philip Larkin, one of English poetry's most recognisable voices, has been memorialised in Westminster Abbey's Poets' Corner. His ledger stone was unveiled last week alongside tombs and memorials commemorating some of the finest writers in English literary history, including Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and T S Eliot.



## **Christian Today**

Reports that a "homeless Jesus" sculpture is to find a new resting place in the centre of Manchester after planners ruled it could be installed there. Manchester City Council has approved plans for the sculpture, by Canada's Timothy Schmalz, to be sited outside the historic St Ann's Church at the heart of the city. The church wants the sculpture outside the Grade I listed building to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people in the city, Manchester Diocese said.

## **BBC**

Reports that a church has undergone a £2m refit thanks to the discovery of a long-lost Flemish masterpiece in a side-aisle. The apparently unremarkable painting was found hanging in Holy Trinity in Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire, in 2006 and identified as Quentin Metsys' Christ Blessing. Given to the church in 1940 by a couple from the nearby village of Holt, the small oil was sold for about £1.5m.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-wiltshire-38225655>

## **BBC**

Report that a replica suit of armour due to be used in a church's Christmas carol tour of local pubs has been stolen. Thieves took the armour and five brass goblets from the crypt of Holy Trinity in Hull almost a week ago, Humberside Police said. The Revd Matt Woodcock said he was "gutted" but the theft was "not going to stop the show". The armour was one of two suits used to dress as Herod's soldiers for the visit to local pubs.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-humber-38223895>